

REMARKS

The following is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action mailed on October 4, 2004. Claims 1-5 were examined. The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thatcher, claims 2, 3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thatcher in view of Darcie and claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harrigan.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner rejected claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thatcher (U.S. Patent No. 5,757,998). In response, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claim 1 recites a plurality of interface assemblies each having a transmitter part which can be selectively inserted and removed from a common receiver part and a common circuitry operating to drive the interface assemblies. However, as the Examiner states, Thatcher fails to disclose a common receiver part. Additionally, Thatcher fails to disclose a common circuitry operating to drive the interface assemblies. These deficiencies preclude Thatcher from rendering claim 1 obvious.

In contrast to the common receiver and circuitry which are critical to the function of the present invention, Thatcher teaches separate receivers and drive circuitries that are critical to the object of the invention disclosed therein. These separate receivers and drive circuitries are part of packages that each includes a transmitter, a receiver and circuits connecting to the receiver and the single transmitter in the package. The packages are hot-pluggable, which enables the packages to be easily interchanged on an electro-optical circuit board. The interchangeability of the packages is a stated object of the design set forth in Thatcher (see Thatcher at col. 8, line 61 through col. 9, line 7), and this interchangeability is dependent on each transmitter and receiver set being packaged together separately. Introducing a common receiving element would completely undermine the separate-package design taught in Thatcher and, hence, the underlying purpose of the invention disclosed in Thatcher. Thus, there is no suggestion whatsoever in Thatcher that the disclosed packages may be modified to include a common receiver part, as argued by the Examiner.

As the foregoing shows Thatcher, fails to teach or suggest a common receiver part and common circuitry to operate the drive interface assemblies, as recited in claim 1. For this reason, Thatcher cannot render claim 1 obvious. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 1 and claim 4 dependent thereon.

The Examiner rejected claims 2, 3 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Thatcher in view of Darcie (U.S. Patent No. 6,014,479). In response, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Darcie suffers from the same deficiencies described above with respect to Thatcher. Specifically, Darcie fails to disclose or suggest a common receiver or a common circuitry, as recited in claim 1, upon which claims 2, 3 and 5 depend. Therefore, Thatcher and Darcie in combination cannot render these claims obvious. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harrigan (U.S. Patent No. 6,069,752). In response, Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claim 1 recites a plurality of interface assemblies each having a transmitter part which can be selectively inserted and removed from a common receiver part for receiving signals and a common circuitry operating to drive the interface assemblies. However, as the Examiner states, Harrigan fails to disclose a common circuitry operating to drive interface assemblies. Additionally, Harrigan fails to disclose a common receiver part for receiving signals. These deficiencies preclude Harrigan from rendering claim 1 obvious.

In contrast to the common receiver which is critical to the function of the present invention, Harrigan teaches separate receivers that are critical to the working of the invention disclosed therein. Harrigan teaches three replaceable units of a laser printer designed to achieve an alignment that is repeatable with respect to separate corresponding fiber-optic coupler assemblies (i.e., receivers). The purpose of the design in Harrigan is to allow easy replacement of the laser assembly included in each replaceable unit should the laser assembly fail. The reference specifically states that each replaceable unit is aligned with one of the fiber-optic coupler assemblies within the laser printer. Thus, upon interchanging one of the replaceable units, independent adjustments are made to the respective fiber-optic coupler assembly to, among other things, align the lateral position of the fiber with respect to the replaceable unit and correct angular errors. The capability to make these adjustments is a stated object of the design set forth

in Harrigan (see Harrigan at col. 8, lines 30-36 and col. 11, lines 51-57). Introducing a common receiving element would completely undermine the ability to separately adjust the appropriate fiber-optic coupler assembly with respect to an interchanged replaceable unit and, hence, the underlying purpose of the invention disclosed in Harrigan. Thus, there is no suggestion whatsoever in Harrigan that the disclosed laser printer may be modified to include a common receiver part for receiving signals.

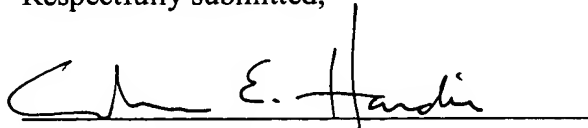
In addition, there is no suggestion of drive circuitry disclosed in Harrigan, let alone any specific drive circuitries. However, any common drive circuitry for the laser assemblies would hinder easy replacement thereof via the replaceable unit, which is the purpose of the design in Harrigan. Therefore, there is further no suggestion whatsoever in Harrigan that the disclosed laser printer may be modified to include a common circuitry operating to drive interface assemblies.

As the foregoing shows Harrigan, fails to teach or suggest a common receiver part and common circuitry to operate the drive interface assemblies, as recited in claim 1. For this reason, Harrigan cannot render claim 1 obvious. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection and allowance of claim 1 and claims dependent thereon.

Conclusion

Based on the above remarks, Applicant believes that he has overcome all of the rejections set forth in the Office Action mailed October 4, 2004 and that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions, please contact the Applicant's undersigned representative at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chance E. Hardie", is written over a horizontal line.

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